

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

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EXPERIMENTAL BLUE-WINGED TEAL SEASON DISCONTINUED

Three years of experimental September teal hunting in the Mississippi and Central flyways have ended with the Interior Department's announcement today that there will be no early season in 1968.

"We believe it unwise to continue this early teal season as long as it subjects hunters to the possibility of prosecution through their inability to identify legal species," said Director John S. Gottschalk of Interior's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife.

He said that in 1967, 47 percent of the observed hunting parties who had an opportunity to fire at protected species did so.

"We recognize the added recreational opportunity of early teal hunting seasons and will make every effort to find a means of making these teal seasons feasible in future years," Dr. Gottschalk said.

The federal wildlife chief added that 1968 surveys indicated breeding teal are down 40 percent from 1965, and habitat is in poor shape.

Another factor, he said, was the unexpectedly large kill of green-winged teal in 1967, more than 20 percent of the teal bag.

Three experimental seasons were agreed upon by State and Federal wildlife agencies because the blue-winged previously escaped most shooting pressure as an early-migrating bird that was in plentiful supply, but mostly "gone" before standard waterfowling began.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mississippi Flyway States: Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, and Wisconsin.

Central Flyway States: Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and those portions of Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, and Wyoming east of the Continental Divide.